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ABSTRACT

The author examines the process by which the formally-structured outgrowths of social movements become part of local power systems. Although social movements often start out in opposition to local power systems, they sometimes merge with those systems in order to operate effectively and to accomplish significant change in the distribution of power. One aspect of this process involves the relationship of movement-sponsored organizations to community controlled organizations. Two major types of relations are possible: support and conversion. Support occurs where the community controlled organization (cco) arises independently of the movement organization (mo) but is supported by it. Conversion describes the situation wherein the mo becomes the cco. Short and long range effectiveness of cco's is somewhat dependent on whether they are supported or come into existence through conversion. A conversion situation is more likely to be effective in the short run and to remain consistent with movement objectives. A support situation is more likely to be effective in the long run but at the possible cost of the objectives. It is hypothesized that supported cco's will be more likely to develop in urban areas and that cco's in rural areas will develop by conversion. (Author/AV)

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MOVEMENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: AN INSTANCE OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT TRANSFORMATION

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I. Introduction

When considering the fate of social movements, attention often is fixed at the most general level so that "the movement" is seen as a single undifferentiated entity. From this perspective, for example, the appropriate response to the question, "Whatever happened to the Civil Rights Movement?" would appear to be that it died sometime in the mid or late 1960's. While this may be an acceptable answer for lay publics, it should not satisfy social scientists. Such statements have an eerie quality suggesting that what was at one time a dynamic organized struggle for some kind of change suddenly evaporated, disappeared into the soil from which it had sprung. Further, they ignore certain issues. Conceptually, they overlook the point that a social movement is made up of a number of movement organizations, organizations whose own careers may parallel only in part the career of the movement itself. While it is generally understood that movement organizations may arise and decline during the course of the movement's career, it is also true that they may maintain their own viability regardless of the fate of the latter itself. This is a critical point for movements in which the central thrust is directed toward achieving the formal right to participate as equals in the social system.[1] That a movement may not long survive after it has brought its constituents to the boundary of the social system as equals does not imply that various of its consitutent movement organizations must suffer a similar fate. On the contrary, such movement organizations may then set themselves to a next logical task, that of giving substance to the formal right of equal participation.

To the point of gaining this right, the movement organization serves

as an "army for the people," as "shock troops," seeking to establish certain rights which may then be used by its constituents. Having achieved these rights in principle at least, the movement organization replaces its shock troop function with the intention to facilitate the orderly "transfer of power," that is, the diffusion of the actual use of these rights throughout its constituent population. Not only is this intended redistribution of power expressed in terms of the exercise of newly won rights by individuals, it is likely to be expressed in terms of "the community" as well. In so doing, the assumption is made that the potential power inherent in the newly won conferral of formal rights will be dissipated if their exercise is a matter of discrete individual acts alone. Rather, only through the utilization of collective power, may impact be made upon the social system sufficient to bring about desired changes. Hence, the idea of "community control" over such service structures as the police or schools suggests that the former dominion enjoyed by the established power structure over services provided to movement constituents is to be supplanted by control by "the people" organized and symbolized by the term "community." Only in this way will the service structure be made responsive to the needs and wishes of (formerly) oppressed populations. Movement organizations, then, assume the task of ensuring that such a power transfer will occur.

In most instances, the initial target in the "post movement" era is the political structure, the objective to gain political control wherever possible and, where not, to develop sufficient strength to exert influence in determining who will exercise political authority. Strategically, this is a sound course of action for not only is the

political institution a critical mechanism for redistributing power, but movement organizations would seem well suited to undertake this task for they are likely to be most experienced in this arena. This approach alone, however, will probably not be sufficient to deal with all problems facing the now formally equal populations. In some areas, significant political influence may not be attainable and in others, some of the most serious problems will not be amenable to solution by relatively direct political means. In these instances, "community control" must be instituted in other spheres. Agricultural marketing co-ops represent one form, industrial manufacturing co-ops another in which "shares" rest in the hands of "the community." Needed services (e.g. day care centers) are provided by "community created" non-profit corporations managed by persons directly responsible to Boards of community citizens and so forth. At this point, then, movement organizations, formed and tested in often bitter opposition to local "establishments," move into that system seeking both to operate effectively and to ensure significant change in the form of a redistribution of the structure of control.

This process is, or should be, of interest to sociologists concerned with social movement transformation and the operations of movement organization in post-movement eras. Of interest as well is its relation to the functioning of community controlled organizations, including, most notably, aspects fundamental to determining their effectiveness.

II. Aspects of the Transformation Process

As a preliminary inquiry into aspects of this process, focus is

centered, first, upon the different "motivations" movement organizations provide for the development of community controlled organizations (or, alternative methods by which movements organizations may stimulate efforts at developing community controlled organizations) and, second, their relations to three issues of importance to community controlled service organizations: service and control area boundaries of the community; discrepancies between the two; and the principal purpose for the establishment of such organizations.[2]

A. Methods by which movement organizations stimulate the development of community controlled organizations. Although there are variations on these themes, there are three general ways in which movement organizations (mo's) may stimulate the development of community controlled organizations (cco's): 1) they may lend their prestige and support to a cco in its developmental phase; 2) they may sponsor such efforts, functioning as a parent group to the organization; or 3) they may convert themselves into such organizations. The initial thrust or direction of the cco is affected by which of these characterize its relation with the movement organization. In the first instance, the cco will tend to develop its own thrust or direction as a distinct identity. Mo support which is offered is indicative that the cco's self-developed approach is consonant with movement goals and values yet the latter has a clearly separate identity and is not bound by mo structure or history. In the second instance, that of sponsorship, the cco is more closely tied to the mo and is more likely to reflect mo structure and be affected by the histroy of the mo. Still, differences between the two organi-

zations in the make-up of leadership cadres and membership indicate that the cco may act autonomously. The greater the differences, the more the autonomy, especially if important elements of the leadership cadre did not participate in the sponsoring mo.[3] In the final instance, that of mo conversion, the orientation of the cco will be essentially the same as that of the mo and will be profoundly affected by its structure and history. Responses to issues, problems and demands by the cco will largely be determined by the mo orientations developed during the movement's life-time.

In populations of movement constituents where secular, action oriented organizations are not well developed, the emergence of cco's most likely will be either by mo sponsorship or mo conversion simply because no other base exists upon which to build a cco. The more the mo represents the sole action oriented entity, the more likely the cco's will arise through the conversion process. While the thus instantaneous development of a well-structured cco would appear to yield clear advantages in terms of initial effectiveness, this may be problematic if certain conditions do not obtain. Most importantly, the question arises as to whether the "social context" of the emergent organization is essentially the same as its predecessor. Generally put, does the cco confront much the same world, much the same set of demands, problems and expectations as did the mo? If so, then it is reasonable to expect that the structure inherited from the mo and the "world views" and strategies which emerged from mo-environmental interaction will be effective when applied by the cco. If, however, the cco operates in a context significantly different from its forerunner, then a period of adjustment will be necessary while

appropriate world views, strategies and structures are worked out. Importantly, if such adjustment does not occur, if, although the context has changed, the cco proceeds as if it is still operating within the context in which the mo operated, not only will effectiveness be hampered but the entire effort will be placed in jeopardy.

The converted cco, then, has the advantage of initial strength of organization whereas the supported and, to a lesser extent, the sponsored cco's have the probable advantage of greater flexibility, the converted cco being most closely bound by mo history.

B. Upon what rationale are the service and control parameters of the cco based? This critical question deals, in part, with the issue raised above. "Community control" implies some notion of the boundaries of the community in terms both of service and control. That is, there must be some idea of the pool of eligibles as potential recipients of the service and as candidates to share in the control function of the organization. The relation of the cco to the movement organization may have a profound influence upon such conceptualizations. CCO's which arise independent of movement organizations are the most likely to develop definitions based upon service considerations alone--need for service, personnel and technological resources available to provide the service and monies available to support service delivery. If committed to the principle of community control, they are also the most likely to seek to involve service target populations in the control of the organization. The least likely to do so are cco's which have been converted from

movement organizations. Rather, the mo is likely to bring with it prior conceptions of constituent areas operative during movement activities and to redefine constituent area as service area, having the power to apply this definition because the cco begins with a coherent well-defined leadership structure. (What this implies for control of the cco is considered in the next section.) CCO's sponsored by movement organizations are most likely to occupy an intermediate position, the position between the above-named two being determined by whether important segments of the membership were involved in prior movement activity. If so, the position will be closer to the cco-by-conversion. If not, it will be closer to the independently-based type. If it is possible to determine upon some rational base what the appropriate service area should be and if this area corresponds to the mo-clientele area, then it does not matter whether the cco is independent or mo converted. If there is a difference, however, then the origins of the cco become a matter of potential importance.

If, then, the viability of the cco is dependent upon service to as large an area as is commensurate with its resources, the supported cco is likely to be most viable by this criterion and the converted cco, least viable.[5]

C. Is the control area seen as synonymous with the service area of the cco? The fundamental principle underlying the idea of community controlled organizations intending to deliver services is that the service area or population is synonymous with the control area or population, that pool of eligibles which has the right to

exercise control over the organization. In practice, this principle may well be violated. When it is, the most common expression is in terms of a relatively small leadership cadre which retains authority in an organization advertised as controlled by "the community" but in which others have no effective voice either in policy decisions or in electing the leadership. While this may occur in independent, sponsored or converted cco's, it is perhaps especially likely to characterize converted mo's for two reasons. First, in the conversion process, the mo leadership comes through intact and already established at the point of birth of the cco. The "problems" of developing leadership, establishing mechanisms for selecting it, actually selecting it, in short, the whole process by which an organization begins to function effectively has been solved by the immediate presence of a cadre functioning in a leadership capacity. Second, the history of the mo will have established the principle of a relatively small group of people reaching decisions and then speaking "in the name of the community." (Movement followership is already accepting of this method of expressing community discontents and has come to equate this with mo's as themselves "community controlled.")

Even if a cco begins in this manner, there is no necessary barrier to its leadership sponsoring a process whereby control expands to fill and coincide with the service area. Yet, while there is no necessary barrier, barriers may, indeed, exist. Most notably in the case of converted cco's, such expansion may be thwarted by conceptions of the world outside the organization's

boundaries which originated in the former mo. If the mo existed in a hostile environment wherein its existence was in considerable jeopardy, where the struggle was often bitter and where a developed opposition existed, the mo was most likely to have developed a small tightly-knit leadership cadre which formulated policy and strategy in as efficient manner as possible, that is, without recourse to the followership. The conversion process may well not alter this view of the outside world so that the cco perceives itself as acting within the same context as its predecessor, a context including adamant opposition, extreme vulnerability and, hence, the need for an elitist authority structure. As a military organization in the midst of a battle neither votes for its leaders nor submits their decisions to parliamentary debate, neither does an mo-cco in a perceived similar situation. While it is an obvious point, it remains both true and important: When an organization is advertised as community controlled, it remains to be determined just how this control is manifest in the actual functioning of the organization.

From a definitional standpoint, then, the supported cco is most likely, in fact, to be community controlled and the converted cco, least likely. Whether control "should be" centralized or diffuse is another issue, one related to increasing the probability of cco success. This, in turn, is related to whether the organization "should" stress efficiency or innovation in decision-making. Generally speaking, the more centralized it is, the more efficient, the more diffuse, the more innovative. The choice here is one of self defense vs. effectiveness in goal achievement and is related

to the amount of external threat to the organization. Where such threat is great, self defense and hence efficiency of decision-making may be hypothesized as most important, hence, the converted mo will have the advantage. When the threat is low, effectiveness, hence innovation may be hypothesized as most effective hence the supported mo is the more viable.[6]

D. Upon what issue is the cco formed; that is, what is the dominant focus of the cco? At first glance, it would appear obvious that the primary issue or dominant focus of the cco would be expressed in terms of the service which the organization seeks to deliver. Hence, marketing coops are to increase the economic well-being of the participants through the selling of agricultural produce in a certain way, day care centers are to provide places of supervised recreation and/or education for children and, thereby, to free persons to engage in other pursuits for a portion of the day and so forth. While this response would characterize cco's of all three types, independent, sponsored and converted, it is least likely to characterize the converted. Different from the former two types, the converted cco begins its existence not only with a history but with a series of foci or orientations. It is, therefore, likely that the service-oriented cco is a product of a focus or orientation developed within the context of the movement organization. While the service function may represent a major objective of the cco, the primary orientation or focus may be different. This also may be true of each of the types of cco's but, again, it is most likely to be true of the converted by reason of prior history. The most

probable primary orientation, when differing from that of providing a service, involves altering the balance of power between the mo constituency and the groups which oppose it or are neutral to it. That is, the service function is, itself, in service to some more basic principle. That principle is most likely to have a political cast given the political orientation of mo's which convert into cco's. This situation, while interesting perhaps, is unimportant unless or until the political and service functions clash, come into conflict or indicate differing responses to issues or courses of action which should be followed. This, too, is unimportant if all members of the cco are in agreement on the relative weights (both in general and situation specific) which should be assigned to the two orientations. However, it does become important if this condition does not hold, if there are differences among the membership on whether the political, the service or some combination of the two orientations should obtain. Differences among cco personnel on the relative importance of the orientations is attributable, in part, to their previous relations to the movement organization or the social movement in general.

Since the supported cco is service-oriented alone, there is a lesser probability of internal conflict than in the converted mo where political and service goals may at times vie for dominance. Internal dispute is especially likely to arise at such points if the cco employs professional personnel to deliver the services. Clashes between professionals and movement veterans in such situations, are almost a certainty.[7] Yet it is also in the converted cco that the long range movement goals are likely to be kept alive, such cco's,

while part of the established structure, still remaining somewhat at odds with it. The supported cco on the other hand is much more likely to "forget" or "betray" movement goals in order to achieve an efficient and smoothly functioning service delivery system well within the parameters of the established order.

III. Conclusion

When large-scale social movements disappear, they do not necessarily take all their components with them. Rather, scattered among the seeming debris may be viable local-oriented movement organizations which are able to make the transition from the movement's goal-oriented activity at one point in time to the next logical phase in the accomplishment of the ideals of the movement. In a non-revolutionary movement, the achievement of formal rights of participation in the established order dictates that the next step is to give substance to those formal rights, to participate but to do so in such a way that the impact of the new participants will be as great as possible. This suggests, then, strategies of collective as well as individual participation, one example of which is participation through "community controlled" organizations which take it upon themselves to deliver needed services to certain populations.

While the development of such community-controlled organizations has long been advocated by persons favoring a redistribution of power and authority, the process involved is neither an easy one nor one devoid of serious problems for those who attempt to institute it including, most clearly, movement organizations. These

problems are related to such issues as: the method whereby the cco is formed, whether independently, by sponsorship or conversion; the nature and method of determining service areas and populations eligible to share in the control function and the dominant orientations of cco's.

A consideration of these issues leads to several preliminary conclusions. Since sponsored cco's are treated as intermediate, attention here is focused on supported and converted cco's. In comparison, supported cco's are: (1) the more flexible; (2) characterized by relatively "uncomplicated" service orientations; (3) because of this, are less likely to be beset by internal disputes (therefore have a long range internal strength); (4) have a greater probability of delivering services to a "rationally" defined area; and (5) conforming to ideal conceptions of community control. (6) Being less tied to movement goals and history, they are more likely to abandon movement principles if they interfere with the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. In addition to (1) loyalty to movement goals, converted cco's are characterized as: (2) possessed of greater short range organizational cohesion and strength which is, however, (3) subject to decay due to lack of clarity over the primacy of political or service functions. These cco's are: (4) more likely to define service areas, not rationally, but on the basis of an mo inspired politically oriented set of criteria and (5) to be governed by a decision making elite.

Finally, brief mention should be made of the conditions fostering one or the other of these processes and the points at which the move-

ment organization, finally, ceases to function. Simply put, the more organizationally experienced the mo's constituent population, the more likely that cco's will arise independent of the mo which may then be supported by the latter. Opportunities for organizational experience not only relate to the size and complexity (heterogeneity) of the population but to the type of oppression experienced by the constituent population. Hence, some types of oppression are conducive to the development of certain kinds of organizations, other types stultify organizational development. As an example and future test of this point, urban regions in the South by virtue of the size and heterogeneity of their black populations and the nature of the oppression permitted considerable organizational experience. Rural areas, on the other hand, permitted comparatively little. Hence, we should expect that mo's based in the former would be more likely to support cco's whereas mo's based in rural areas would more likely convert to cco's.

The ultimate demise of the mo which supports cco development may be postulated to follow this (briefly outlined) course. With each case of successful support, a cco arises to claim the attention of the constituent population as it serves their needs. The corollary of the popular ascendancy of cco's is the diminution of impact of the supporting mo's. Further, we may expect that these special interest cco's will siphon off the activist membership of the mo, those persons who wish to continue to deal with the problems which confront the target population. These two factors, then, contribute to the reduction in importance of the mo to its target population and lead, hence, to the eventual withering away of the mo.

In the case of converted cco's, it would seem that by definition the mo ceased to exist at the point of its conversion. There is likely to be more to this process, however, something which involves a kind of bitter irony for mo members.

When local movement organizations are in the center of intense struggles with opposition groups, all those who wish for their success yield respect to the activists if for no other reason than that their actions redound to the benefit of all, activists and non-activists alike. Movement organization members enjoy high status in the community because of their opposition to established power. In this context, activists are on the offensive and, thus, have comparatively little to defend. However, in the case of mo's which convert to community controlled organizations in order to continue the struggle for the ends of the movement, the relationship of organization (and members) to constituency changes in the process. In establishing projects intended to serve community residents, mo's-become-cco's are developing entities which may need to be defended. Whereas previously, activists were free to attack the institutions and organizations of others for failing to serve populations in need, now the organizations which the activists themselves create are vulnerable to the same kind of attack from their own constituents. For the first time, then, activists are vulnerable to the same order of complaints and criticisms which they have leveled at others. Hence, by continuing the struggle, by keeping the movement "alive" through pursuit of its ultimate ends, by converting to an organization based upon the principle of collective power and intended to provide services

and substance to the formal rights which have been achieved, activists risk the respect, the leadership positions they enjoyed in the very communities which were the beneficiaries of their labors. It seems entirely possible, then, that a major result of the converted cco may be the demise of the mo leadership (and its community status) and its replacement by a cadre of bureaucratically-oriented trained administrators capable of the efficient management of such delivery systems. If this, in fact, does occur, it is at this point that it is legitimate to say that the movement organization has, finally, passed from the scene.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Since this paper is a preliminary inquiry into the subject of "post-movement" organizations, I have restricted consideration to the kind of movement with which I am most familiar. If my conclusions are valid, they may, then, be valid for other kinds of movements as well.

[2]Time and space restrictions imposed upon papers delivered at ASA meetings force the elimination of material illustrative of the points made in the presentation. While still limited at this stage of my research, such material is available. Motivation for this paper, in fact, originated from data drawn from a case study of a movement organization which established a health clinic in a Southern rural community.

[3]This is likely to be the case when the mo sponsors cco's led by persons too young to have occupied central positions in the mo. In such cases, the mo may forge ties with the younger generation and encourage the development of a new community leadership cadre.

[4]Similarity of social context before and after achievement of formal rights is related to how established organizations and agencies accept this achievement. If accepted willingly, the contexts will differ appreciably. If however, the established order reacts as if it has been unjustly coerced, the contexts may be very similar.

[5]An example is the mo which converted to a health delivery cco. The mo had been one of a number of such organizations united in a loose confederation, each one located within a political district. These political districts were movement fiefdoms, each mo controlling its own and careful not to violate the boundaries of any order. Upon conversion, the mo-cco would have appeared to create a wider sphere of influence or target population because its health clinic was the only one in any of the political districts. Not only were the residents of other political districts potential patients, it was necessary to attract them if the health facility were to be economically viable. From a need standpoint, then, political (and mo) boundary lines were not rational indicators of the "logical" parameters of a health delivery system. Yet the Board of the converted cco (themselves leaders of the mo) persisted in treating the political boundaries as defining the service area as well.

Footnotes (Continued)

While there were occasional forays into other political districts to emphasize the existence and worth of the Health Center, such actions were conceptualized as entering into other political districts (i.e., discrete entities) and onto the turf of other movement organizations even though these organizations, by and large, were defunct at the time of entry. Therefore, the general population in need of health services was not treated as a single entity, a single population to be approached, but rather as a number of populations identifiable in terms of political subdivisions having no relation to health needs and services. Such forays usually involved contacts and meetings with the leadership cadre of the former mo's, persons with whom the leadership of the mo-become-cco had worked during movement days. Since these persons no longer led viable organizations, such contacts were less than productive. Yet the feeling clearly remained that to go directly to the people (e.g., through churches) in these other political districts would have been to violate a turf principle. It seems probable that a cco not an outgrowth of a movement organization or, at the least, one whose leadership cadre had not been involved in the movement would have been less reluctant to cross political boundaries.

[6]In the organization referred to in Footnote 5, the leadership made little effort to expand the population-in-control of the cco beyond the relatively small leadership cadre of the originating mo. The leadership argued that to expand the membership would only risk introducing differences of opinion, dissension, into the organization and thereby weaken it, making it vulnerable to destruction by its enemies. Later, it was argued, when the organization had time to become strong, extended membership would be encouraged. The paradox here, of course, is that in accordance with the idea of community control, the organization would only become strong with an expanded membership base. The irony is that no opposition to the cco existed which was of the same order as that experienced by the mo. The contexts within which the two organizations operated simply were not the same. While it might be argued that movement organizations recruited large numbers of persons to "the cause," witness attendance at demonstrations and mass meetings, without risking the position of the leadership cadre, this contention overlooks one important point. Large numbers could be recruited for such activities precisely because they were not voting members; recruitment to the cco automatically conferred voting rights and, hence, a potential threat to the leadership cadre. The result of this approach by the leadership was that the only persons actively recruited were those who either had been civil rights activists or whose views were sufficiently well known to insure that they would constitute no "threat" to the organization or the leadership cadre.

[7]Examples of potential for clashes between political and service

Footnotes (Continued)

functions are suggested here. Among oppressed groups the existence of a cco service delivery system is a political statement that the oppressed may in fact, develop their own organization, take control of their own destinies. Rules and regulations governing such organizations and codes of ethics governing the activities of professionals employed by the cco may be seen as hampering the political effectiveness of the cco whereas the professionals may see them as enhancing the service effectiveness. Impatience at their effect on the part of the Board of the cco may be matched by dedication to them by the professional staff thereby causing strain between the two. Second, while the cco is a service organization, allocation of resources may be oriented more to enhancing the political stature of the cco or its service effectiveness. Here again, Board and staff may disagree over such allocations, the former feeling that the latter are trying to "take over" the organization and the latter feeling the former are hampering the mission of the organization and their own effectiveness. Finally, employment in the cco may become a problem where professionals are involved. Professionals, understandably, will tend to focus on relevant training and job oriented experience for all persons employed by the cco. Politically, cco members may urge the employment of local community residents with lesser qualifications in order to unite the community behind the enterprise and, thus, make it a more coherent force. It seems likely that anyone who has been involved with cco's can cite any number of examples of problems of a similar nature which have arisen in their own organizations.